

Meet The Attys Opening A New Tech Patent Law Firm In DC

By **Jack Rodgers**

Law360 (March 10, 2022, 1:13 PM EST) -- Michael Kiklis and Kimani Clark's paths first crossed in 1997, when they began working with each other at Finnegan Henderson Farabow Garrett & Dunner LLP, and on Wednesday the business partners announced they had opened their own patent-focused firm.



Michael Kiklis



Kimani Clark

Kiklis & Clark PLLC announced it launched its patent boutique practice with a specific focus on software and computer technologies. Kiklis and Clark each have more than 20 years of experience working on patent-related litigation.

They spoke with Law360 about their relationship and the firm's founding in an interview Wednesday. Their responses have been edited for length and clarity.

Can you talk about how your relationship first began?

Clark: I started out at Finnegan Henderson, and Mike was one of the first attorneys that I worked with. He had just come from another firm and was a few years ahead of me. We had started working together in the electrical group, and we both had the same computer science and engineering background. We continued working together for years, and at one point we went to what is now Dentons Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP together as a group to start the D.C. patent practice there. We also went to [Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP]. I've been working with Mike for about half of my career; I've been practicing for about 25 years.

Kiklis: Kimani and I work together on some really, really high stakes matters, and we just had this bond and the way we worked together was just phenomenal. It was just a partnership that really, really worked. For the past dozen years or so we were at different firms, and then we just decided it's time for us to get back together and form a new, innovative law firm where innovation is really the pillar to our law firm.

Clark: I'd also add, we've also always gotten along personally. In the second half of my career that I

wasn't working with Mike, we'd stayed in touch. We've gone to lunch periodically, because, on top of liking to work with each other, we like each other personally.

You've mentioned the pillar of the firm being focused on innovative technology. I'm wondering what sort of new ideas Kiklis & Clark will offer clients?

Kiklis: Together, Kimani and I have over 50 years' experience in software and computer technology. And with that, we're bringing innovation to client service, but at all aspects of the firm, from the way we run the firm, to technology, to client service. And the person best to speak about this is Kimani. We just innovate every single day; if we could do something better, we do something better. And so, we're a small firm, we're nimble, we can change our processes almost immediately without having to go through any bureaucracy or anything. That's what we're planning on doing.

Clark: One of the ideas for it is innovating in every aspect of the business and a lot of that can have an impact on the clients. And this can be in client service, in anything; say, automation, is one thing that can add to accuracy, speed, efficiency, reduced costs, but also one of the effects of doing that kind of thing is freeing up the attorneys to operate at their highest level, so they're not stuck in the weeds doing things, and that also can allow for productivity for the client.

Clark: We actually want to look at every single aspect of the business. Say, if you take an innovative tech company, the way that they operate can be a little bit different than the way, say, a traditional law firm operates. We want to bring any efficiencies or ideas for that to our firm. And what we want to do is in every single area of the firm, be continually doing that. So we want to improve on where we were in the previous month on an ongoing basis.

What are some of your goals for Kiklis & Clark during its first few weeks?

Kiklis: This is the formal launch of the firm; we've actually been in business for several weeks. During that time, what we've been doing is really putting the infrastructure together. I can really take my hat off to Kimani on this; he's just done a great job, we've been vetting lots of vendors and finding the right pieces to put together and again, following up on what Kimani said, using innovation at every single step. Where we can have things automatically, for whatever process within the firm and that frees us up, we have that done.

Clark: In this process we are also serving clients, clients who have signed up with us already. But yes, that is one of the things and this will actually be something that will be ongoing for a while. As things are being set up, they can be set up fairly easily if it's just on a manual, one-off basis, but if you think about it from the perspective of we actually want to make this the most efficient and scalable way, it takes a little bit more effort and time in the beginning.

Kiklis: So we won't experience growing pains.

Clark: Yeah, that's a good way of putting it. And one of the things of [building] intentionally is building things out so it's scalable. It's thinking forward to, "OK, if this was way more people working on this, would this still work?" And that's how we're setting things up in the beginning.

Kiklis: One of the key things is when people hire us, they get us, right? That's what this is all about. You get to work directly with us. That's different from a lot of law firm models where the work is pushed down and what have you. But here, when people hire us, they're actually going to get to work directly with us. We run our cases, and we'll use people additionally as us, but they're going to get to work directly with us.

--Editing by Alyssa Miller.